

REMARKS

With entry of this amendment, claims 18 and 19 have been cancelled. As a result, claims 1-9, 20-23, 37-47, 126-136, and 138-177 remain pending in this application. Based on the foregoing amendments and following remarks, reconsideration and allowance of this application is respectfully requested.

Claim Rejections-35 U.S.C. §102

Claims 1, 2, and 4-9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over U.S. Patent No. 7,072,719 ("Vinup"). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection, since Vinup does not disclose, teach, or suggest the combination of elements required by these claims, as amended.

In particular, claims 1, 2, and 4-9 have been amended to depend from now-independent claim 20, which as described in further detail below, is believed to be patentable over the cited prior art.

Thus, Applicant submits that claims 1, 2, and 4-9 are not obvious over Vinup, and as such, respectfully request withdrawal of the §103 rejection of these claims.

Claim Rejections-35 U.S.C. §103

Claims 3 and 20-23 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103, as being obvious over Vinup in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,578,733 ("Cross"). Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection, since no proper combination of Vinup and Cross discloses, teaches, or suggests the combination of elements required by these claims.

In particular, claim 20, which has been amended to be an independent claim, comprises delivering the second stimulation lead into the epidural space by sliding the

complementary coupling mechanism along the coupling mechanism, such that the proximal end of the first elongated body extends from the opening in the patient's back, and the second elongated body is entirely received within the patient's spine. Claim 3 has been amended to depend from claim 20.

As disclosed in the specification, this feature allows the percutaneous opening into the patient's back to made smaller (see page 27, lines 5-8). Although Applicant pointed out in the previous response that neither Vinup nor Cross discloses this feature, expressly or inherently, Applicant could not find in the office action where the Examiner addressed this argument. If the Examiner continues to maintain that claim 20 is obvious over the combination of Vinup and Cross, it is respectfully requested that he specifically point out the basis for the rejection.

Thus, Applicant submits that independent claim 20, as well as the claimed depending therefrom (claims 3 and 21-23), are not obvious over any proper combination of Vinup and Cross, and as such, respectfully request withdrawal of the §103 rejection of these claims.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant graciously acknowledges the allowance of claims 37-47, 126-136, and 138-177.

Conclusion

Based on the foregoing, it is believed that all claims are now allowable and a Notice of Allowance is respectfully requested. If the Examiner has any questions or comments regarding this response, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at (949) 724-1849.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: January 27, 2009

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